

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1367

(Delegate Corderman, *et al.*)

Appropriations and Environment and
 Transportation

Finance

Transportation - Western Maryland MARC Rail Extension - Study

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to conduct a study and develop recommendations on the feasibility, including the cost, of extending Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail service to Western Maryland. MDOT must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2022. **The bill terminates April 30, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$1.4 million in FY 2021 and by \$2.3 million in FY 2022. Revenues are not affected.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	1.4	2.3	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$1.4)	(\$2.3)	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Affected local governments can participate in the study as necessary using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In conducting the required study, MDOT must:

- examine existing commuter rail facilities in the State and current transportation options in Western Maryland;
- identify the possibilities and challenges related to establishing and operating MARC rail service in Western Maryland;
- study the public transportation needs of Allegany and Washington counties in the vicinity of interstates 70 and 81;
- confer with specified stakeholders, including specified local governments;
- identify infrastructure needs;
- perform a cost benefit analysis of the capital and operating costs of extending MARC rail service to Western Maryland;
- identify all potential stops and estimate the potential ridership for each stop;
- study and compare the potential ridership for rush-hour-only service and all-day service;
- develop recommendations on the potential starting and end points of a MARC extension that would reach specified areas;
- examine the potential of connecting (1) the CSX Transportation (CSX) Green Line to an inactive line in Washington County and (2) an extended CSX Green Line to the Marc Brunswick Line;
- explore the potential effect that extending MARC rail service to Western Maryland would have on CSX; and
- identify any Department of Natural Resources (DNR) rights-of-way that may be in the path of a potential MARC line that would extend commuter rail service to Western Maryland.

MDOT's recommendations must address the feasibility of planning, financing, constructing, and operating a MARC line that extends commuter rail service to Western Maryland.

Current Law/Background: The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) operates a comprehensive transit system throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, including more than 50 local bus lines in Baltimore and other services such as the light rail, Baltimore Metro subway, commuter buses, MARC trains, and mobility/paratransit vehicles. MTA is also responsible for hundreds of transit stations.

MARC commuter train service operates three different lines that serve several Maryland counties; Washington, DC; and Martinsburg, West Virginia: (1) the Brunswick Line;

(2) the Camden Line; and (3) the Penn Line. In December 2013, MARC began to offer weekend service on the Penn Line; the other lines offer service only on weekdays and select holidays. MARC train service on the Brunswick Line operates between Brunswick, Maryland and Union Station in Washington, DC. This line also includes an extension to Frederick, Maryland and Martinsburg, West Virginia. Stops along the Brunswick Line include areas surrounding Washington, DC, such as Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Silver Spring, Maryland. MARC service is provided by running State-owned MARC trains on existing Amtrak railways owned by CSX.

[The MARC Cornerstone Plan](#) addresses a 30-year planning period and identifies capital improvements needed to maintain a state of good repair for the MARC system. The plan also outlines capital needs required to improve and expand service.

MTA and the Virginia Railway Express are currently exploring the potential for MARC to extend service to Northern Virginia. No potential extension of service to Western Maryland is being explored at this time.

State Expenditures: MDOT has 21 months to conduct the required study pursuant to the timeframe established by the bill. In addition, the study is likely to be extensive and involve significant research, data collection, stakeholder outreach and collaboration, surveys, and analysis. Accordingly, MTA must rely considerably on consultant assistance. As a result, TTF expenditures increase by \$1.4 million in fiscal 2021 and by \$2.3 million in fiscal 2022 to conduct the study.

Small Business Effect: Given the scope, scale, and timeframe of the study, MDOT anticipates needing considerable contractual assistance. As a result, some small businesses may experience increased business to assist MDOT with the study.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

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